



## WORDS: THEIR CAUSE AND CURE

Today let us take up the subject of etymology (or eponymology, as it is sometimes called) which is the study of word origins (or insects, as they are sometimes called).

Where are word origins (insects) to be found? Well sir, sometimes words are proper names which have passed into the language. Take, for instance, the words used in electricity: *ampere* was named after its discoverer, the Frenchman Andre Marie Ampere (1775-1836); similarly, *ohm* was named after the German G.S. Ohm (1781-1854), *watt* after the Scot James Watt (1736-1819), and *bulb* after the American Fred C. Bulb (1843-1912).

There is, incidentally, quite a poignant little story about Mr. Bulb. Until Bulb's invention, all illumination was provided by gas, which was named after its inventor Milton T. Gas



who, strange to tell, had been Bulb's roommate at Cal Tech! In fact, strange to tell, the third man sharing the room with Bulb and Gas was also one whose name burns bright in the annals of illumination—Walter Candle!

The three roommates were inseparable companions in college. After graduation all three did research in the problems of artificial light, which at this time did not exist. All America used to go to bed with the chickens, and many fine citizens were, alas, severely injured falling off the roost.

Well sir, the three comrades—Bulb, Gas, and Candle—promised to be friends forever when they left school, but success, alas, spoiled all that. First Candle invented the candle, got rich, and forgot his old friends. Then Gas invented gas, got rich, bankrupted Candle, and forgot his old friends. Then Bulb invented the bulb, got rich, bankrupted Gas, and forgot his old friends.

Candle and Gas, bitter and impoverished at the ages respectively of 75 and 71, went to sea as respectively the world's oldest and second oldest cabin boy. Bulb, rich and grand, also went to sea, but he went in style—as a first-class passenger on luxury liners.

Well sir, strange to tell, all three were aboard the ill-fated Lusitania when she was sunk in the North Atlantic. And strange to tell, when they were swimming for their lives after the shipwreck, all three clambered aboard the same dinghy!

Well sir, clastered and made wiser by their brush with peril, they fell into each other's arms and wept and exchanged forgiveness and became fast friends all over again.

For three years they drifted in the dinghy, shaking hands and singing the Cal Tech rouser all the while. Then, at long last, they spied a passing liner and were taken aboard.

They remained fast friends for the rest of their days, which, I regret to report, were not many, because the liner which picked them up was the Titanic.

What a pity that Marlboros were not invented during the lifetimes of Bulb, Gas, and Candle. Had there been Marlboros, these three friends never would have grown apart because they would have realized how much, despite their differences, they still had in common. I mean to say that Marlboros can be lit by candle, by gas, and by electricity, and no matter how you light them, you always get a lot to like—a filter, a flavor, a pack or box that makes anyone—including Bulb, Gas, and Candle—settle back and forswear pettiness and smile the sweet smile of friendship on all who pass!

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*Etymology is not the business of the makers of Marlboro Cigarettes, who sponsor this column. We deal in rich tobaccos and fine filters. Try a pack soon.*

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